

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-09

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R 230849Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3253

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: SYRIAN PRESS CONTINUES ANALYZE U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY
REASSESSMENT AND U.S. APPROACH TO GENEVA CONFERENCE

1. SYRIAN PRESS OVER PAST FEW DAYS HAS COMMENTED
PESSIMISTICALLY ON U.S. POLICY REASSESSMENT TOWARD
MIDDLE EAST. YUNIS HAYDAR IN APRIL 19 AL-THAWRAH
POINTS TO PRIMIN RABIN'S STATEMENT THAT U.S. POLICY
REASSESSMENT WILL NOT AFFECT CURRENT ARMS SHIPMENTS
TO ISRAEL AS UNDERCUTTING THOSE WHO HAVE SPECULATED ON
EXISTENCE SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN U.S. AND ISRAEL.
SUCH SPECULATION, HE SAID, RESEMBLES "BETTING ON LOSING
HORSE" BECAUSE ANY DISPUTE BETWEEN U.S. AND ISRAEL IS
MERELY TACTICAL. U.S. POLICY CAN ONLY BE INFLUENCED BY
"NEW REALITIES" SUCH AS ARAB VICTORY IN OCTOBER
WAS AND U.S. LOSS OF CAMBODIA. THEREFORE, ARABS
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MUST "REINFORCE" THESE REALITIES. APRIL 20 AL-BAATH

COLUMNIST DEVOTED LENGTHY SPACE TO ANALYSIS OF U.S.-ISRAEL DEFENSE TREATY WHICH HE CLAIMED WAS "UNDER ACTUAL STUDY BY AMERICAN GOVERNMENT." HE WROTE THAT A TREATY WOULD BE FAVORABLE TO ISRAELI INTERESTS FOR FOLLOWING FOUR REASONS: (A) ISRAEL WOULD USE TREATY TO MAINTAIN ITS OCCUPATION OF ARAB TERRITORY; (B) TREATY WOULD, IN ISRAELI VIEW, DETER ARAB AND PARTICULARLY PALESTINIAN ATTACKERS; (C) ISRAEL WOULD BECOME IN U.S. EYES A NATO STATE, WHICH WOULD LEAD TO "NUMEROUS REPERCUSSIONS" IN REGARD TO MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE AND INTERNATIONAL BALANCE OF FORCES; (D) "GRAVEST OF ALL, TREATY WOULD FREEZE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION" AND WOULD BECOME FORCE READY TO STRIKE AT ARAB REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

2. APRIL 18 AL-THAWRAH COLUMNIST CHARACTERIZES ISRAELI LEADERS AS URGING RESUMPTION KISSINGER MISSION BECAUSE THEY FEAR RESULTS OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. HE CALLS UPON ALL ARABS TO "EMPHASIZE GENEVA CONFERENCE ALONE AS FRAMEWORK FOR ANY PEACE TALKS." HE SAYS THAT AMERICAN EFFORTS FAILED DURING KISSINGER SHUTTLE, BUT "COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF DONE AT GENEVA CONFERENCE UNDER UN FLAG FOR APPLICATION UN RESOLUTIONS AND IF COUPLED WITH EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL WHICH WASHINGTON HAS NOT YET DONE." APRIL 22 AL-BAATH PUBLISHED ACCOUNT OF DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS THAT U.S. HAS NO DEFINITE DATE FOR CONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE. TERMING THIS A "NEW AMERICAN POSTPONE-MENT," ARTICLE ACCUSES U.S. OF DELAYING GENEVA TO AID ISRAELI POLITICAL-MILITARY READJUSTMENT THAT WILL ENABLE ISRAEL TO CONTINUE ITS OCCUPATION ARAB TERRITORIES.

3. COMMENT: PREVAILING VIEW IN SYRIAN PRESS IS THAT ARABS SHOULD NOT HOPE FOR MUCH CHANGE TO RESULT FROM U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY REASSESSMENT. PRESS FINDS GENEVA PREFERABLE TO OTHER COURSES, BUT REMAINS AMBIVALENT ON U.S. ROLE TOWARD IT, ONE ONE HAND SEEING U.S. PARTICIPATION AS ESSENTIAL AND ON OTHER SUSPICIOUS THAT ANY U.S. ACTION WILL SOMEHOW INEVITABLY FAVOR ISRAEL. MURPHY

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